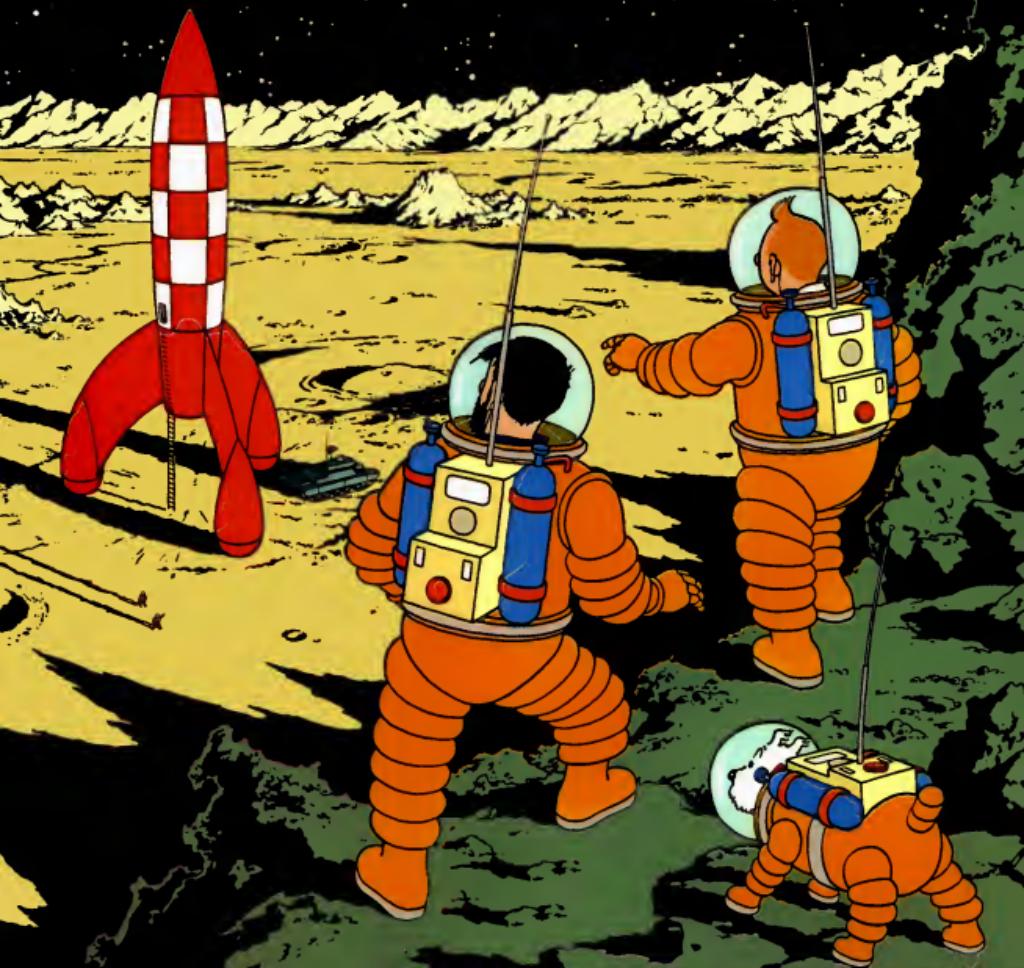


- HERGE -

THE ADVENTURES OF

TINTIN

★
**EXPLORERS
ON THE MOON**



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THE ADVENTURES OF
TINTIN
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**EXPLORERS
ON THE MOON**



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
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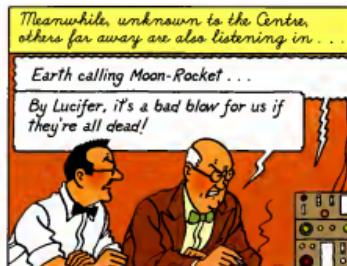
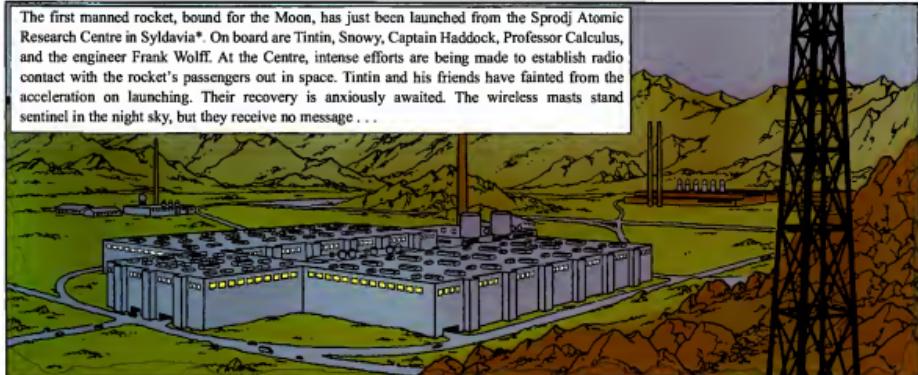
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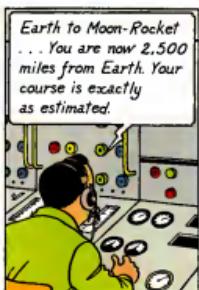
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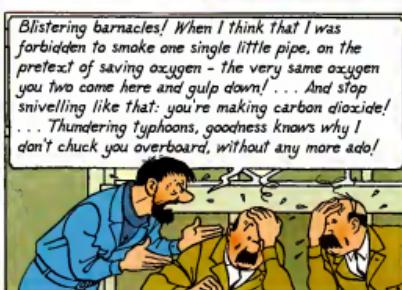
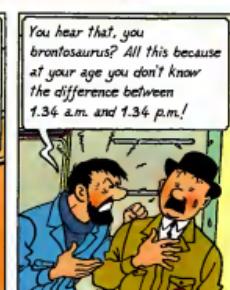
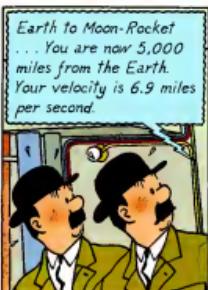
EXPLORERS ON THE MOON

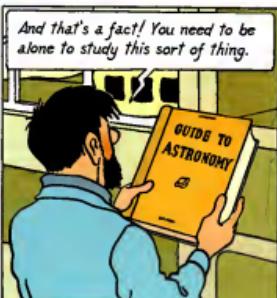
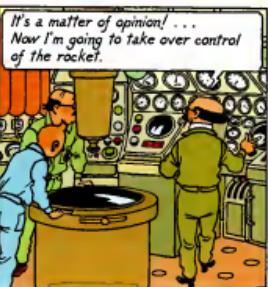
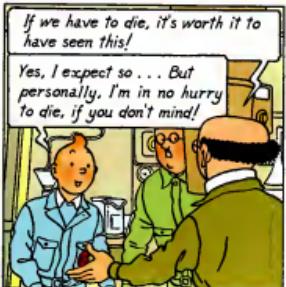
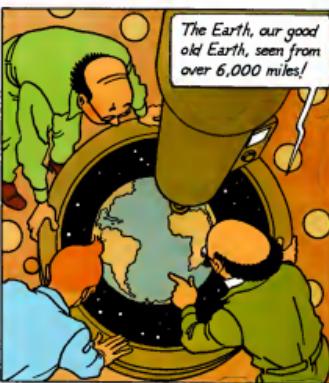
The first manned rocket, bound for the Moon, has just been launched from the Sprodj Atomic Research Centre in Syldavia*. On board are Tintin, Snowy, Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus, and the engineer Frank Wolff. At the Centre, intense efforts are being made to establish radio contact with the rocket's passengers out in space. Tintin and his friends have fainted from the acceleration on launching. Their recovery is anxiously awaited. The wireless masts stand sentinel in the night sky, but they receive no message . . .



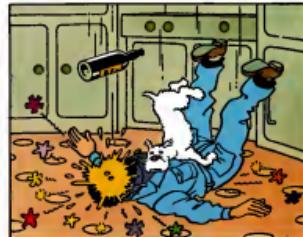
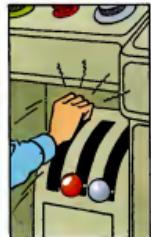
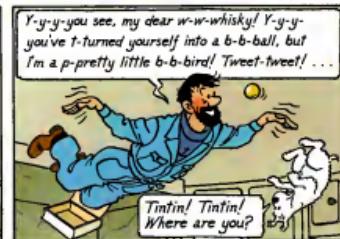
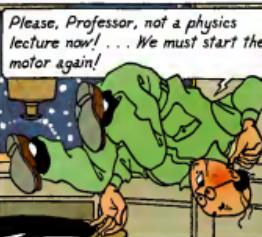
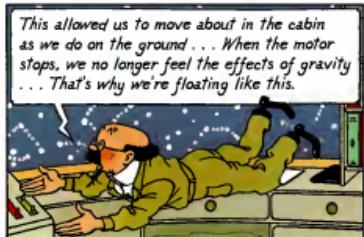
* See Destination Moon











Earth to Moon-Rocket?
... What's going on? ...
Why have you stopped
the nuclear motor?



Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . One of the two detectives accidentally closed the motor throttle . . . But we've just started her up again.
It's funny, we held on very tight!

Yes, but what to?



To be on the safe side I'm issuing everyone with magnetic-soled boots . . .



The Professor's right. If the nuclear motor stops again for any reason, these soles will hold us down to the cabin floor. Then we shan't float about like balloons.



Unless I'm dreaming, there's Adonis!

Who's Adonis? A friend of yours living near here?



The asteroid Adonis is a dwarf planet which orbits between Mars and Jupiter. It is a rock-like mass, about a mile in diameter . . . Take my place and watch, while I put on my boots . . . but for goodness sake don't touch anything!



There, that's that . . . But how do you account for one pair left over? . . . Has someone not put on his boots?



Hello, Snowy boy. Did you get very bumped about?

So there you are Tintin! . . . If only you knew what happened!



And the Captain? . . . Where's the Captain? . . . I . . . Hello, what's that piece of paper, there on the table?



Great snakes! It's fantastic! . . . He's gone out of his mind! . . . Quick, the Professor must see this . . .



Goodness! How lucky we put these boots on. The motor's stopped again . . . What's the matter this time?



RRRING RRRING
RRRING

You see, Tintin? It's begun again!

Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . For some unknown reason the outer door has just opened. The nuclear motor stopped automatically. I'm going to see why . . .



Here's the answer! . . . Read this note I just found on the table, on the deck below . . .



'I'm fed up with your rotten rocket! I'm going home to Marlinspike. Signed: Haddock . . . Goodness gracious, then it was he who . . . Has he gone mad?



Mad? No, I think he's just soaked himself in whisky. In any case, we must look for him. If you agree, I'll put on my space-suit and go out myself . . .



A few minutes later . . .

Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . The Captain has suddenly taken it into his head to jump out of the rocket . . . Tintin has gone out as well, to try and help him.

Ah, there he is.

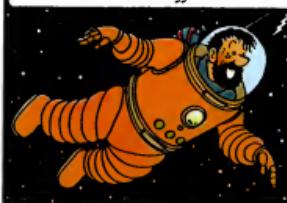


Hello Captain! Hello! . . . Can you hear me?

Cuckoo, it's me!



Of course I c-c-can hear you . . . Can you hear m-m-me? . . . Tweet-tweet . . . Tweet-tweet . . . You see: I've turned into a little chaffinch . . .



Hello, Professor . . . Tintin calling. I can see the Captain. He's floating about ten yards from the rocket, going at the same speed as ourselves. I'll do all I possibly can to get him back on board . . .



All right.

Me b-b-back on b-b-board your beastly flying cigar? N-n-never in my life! I'm off h-h-home to Marlinspike!



But it is! . . . He's getting further away from the rocket!



Poor Captain! . . . Now I see: he's being pulled into orbit by Adonis! . . . He's lost!



Hello Professor Calculus . . . Tintin calling . . . The Captain's getting further and further away . . . attracted by Adonis.



This is terrible! . . . Surely there must be something we can do?

Of course . . . We must inform Earth at once, and tell them Adonis has a new satellite by the name of Haddock!

Getting further away? . . . That's only to be expected . . . He's become a satellite of Adonis!



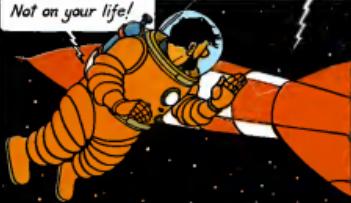
Not so fast! I have a plan: you raise the retractable ladder at once, so that I can anchor myself securely. Then, start up the motor: gently at first, but getting faster and faster . . .

But what are you hoping to do?



To get close enough to the Captain to throw him a line, and pull him aboard.

Pull me aboard! . . . Not on your life!



It's sheer madness! . . . But I admire you for wanting to try . . . I'll raise the retractable ladder as you said, and wait for your orders . . .



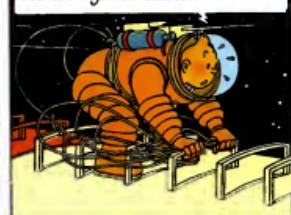
Tintin here . . . I'm securely anchored . . . You can start the motor . . .



All right . . . I . . . Tintin, it's terribly risky . . . But, good luck, anyway! Steady now: I'm starting the motor . . .



Tintin calling . . . I got a terrific jolt but I managed to hold on . . . You are right on course . . .

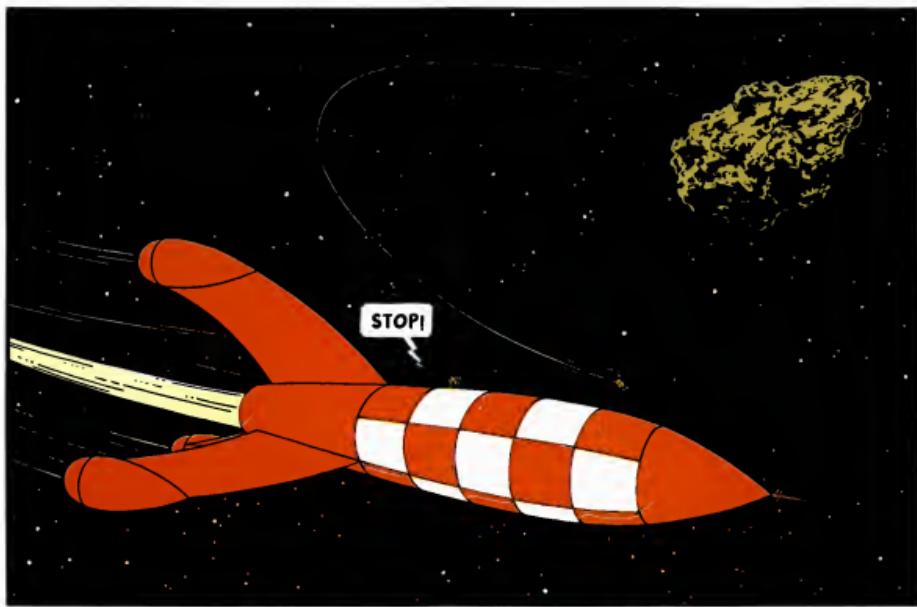


Yes, I can see the Captain . . . I'll close up to him. But for goodness' sake be quick. As soon as the motor stops Adonis will start dragging us into orbit.



I'll do my best . . . Steady now! Stand by to cut the motor!









For the time being, until your medicine takes effect, I'll cut this shock of hair for you. But first let's go below; it will be easier down there . . .



Here, give me the scissors. I'll shear these merino lambs myself!

OK? . . . As you please . . .



Earth to Moon-Rocket . . .
Stand by . . . Attention! . . .
Attention!

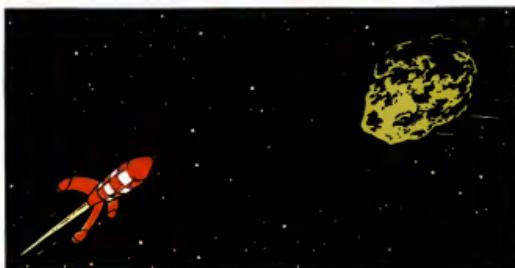
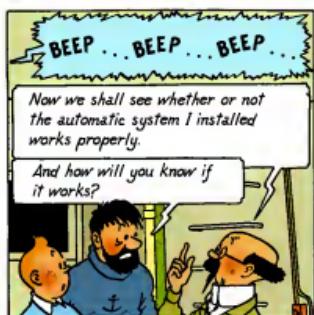
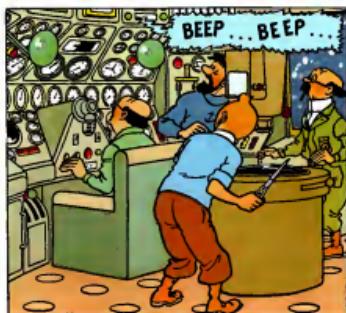


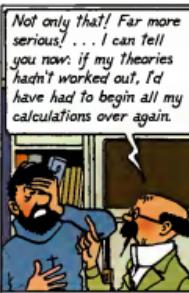
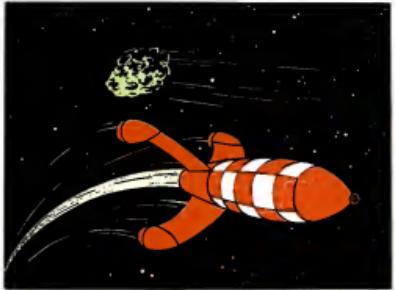
Earth to Moon-Rocket . . .
Stand by . . . The turning operation will have to be made in twenty minutes' time.



Right . . . We're waiting for your instructions.







A few minutes later . . .

And when anyone asks me later on: "What was your job in the rocket?" I'll say, "Me? I was the hairdresser!"



A mop like this doesn't
need a pair of scissors to
cut it . . .



. . . if needs pruning-shears,
ten thousand thundering
typhoons, or a lawn-mower!



Whew! There's one cropped! Next gentleman,
please! . . . What? . . . Is His Highness not satisfied?

Ha! ha! ha! . . . My
poor fellow! If you could
see yourself!



Go on, laugh! Laugh! . . . If
you imagine you look more
dignified than your esteemed
friend, you've got another
thing coming!



And none of this would have
happened, thundering typhoons,
if you'd been able to tell the
blistering difference between
1 p.m. and 1 a.m.!



There, that's finished! . . .
Look at my hands now! . . .
All covered in blisters!



Well, what is it? His lordship
isn't pleased? . . . What more do
you want? . . . A shampoo and
set? . . . Or would you rather I
put it in curlers?



Look! . . . There! . . .

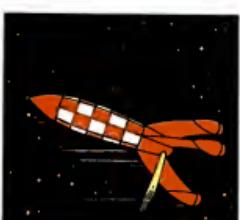


Ha! ha! ha! My poor
fellow! If you could
see yourself!



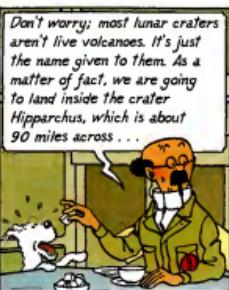
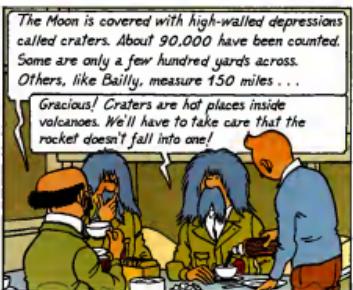
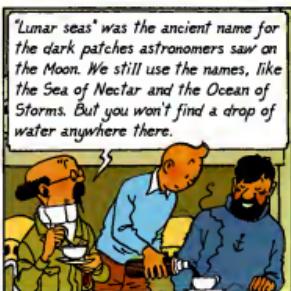
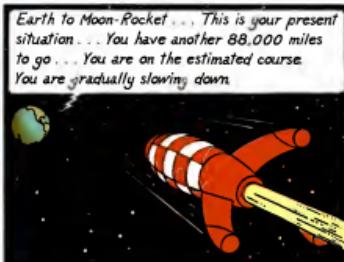


Earth to Moon-Rocket . . . Stand by to start up the directional thrust . . . Ten seconds to go . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . ZERO.



Stand by to start up the main motor . . . Ten seconds to go . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . ZERO.



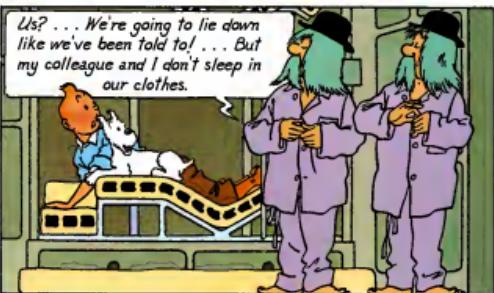




Moon-Rocket to Earth...
Right... We are making
final preparations... The
Professor is now setting
the automatic pilot...



Another seven points East... No, that's too
much... One point West, Wolff... There,
that's it! The rocket is now heading right
for the centre of the crater Hipparchus.



Here,
Snowy!

You see, you'll feel
much...

Us?... We're going to lie down
like we've been told to!... But
my colleague and I don't sleep in
our clothes.



... better here while the rocket
... I say! What do you think
you're doing?

Blistering barnacles! You don't
have to sleep, you prize purple
jelly-fishes! You were told to lie
down. That's all! So jump to it!



And get a move on, you dunder-headed
Ethelreds!... If the Professor catches you still
around, he'll probably maroon you on an empty
planet... Look, here he comes now.



Ah, everybody
lying down?
That's good.
You must come
now, Wolff.



Moon-Rocket to Earth
... All's well. We are
ready. The automatic pilot
is set towards the middle
of the crater Hipparchus.
We're all lying on our
bunks, waiting.



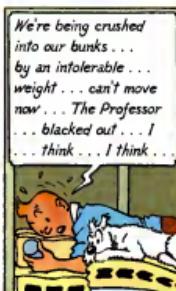
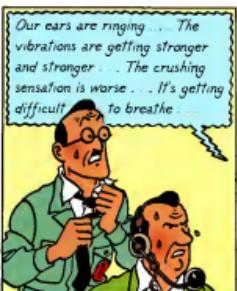
Moon-Rocket to Earth
... The nuclear motor
has just stopped, and
the auxiliary engine
has taken over.

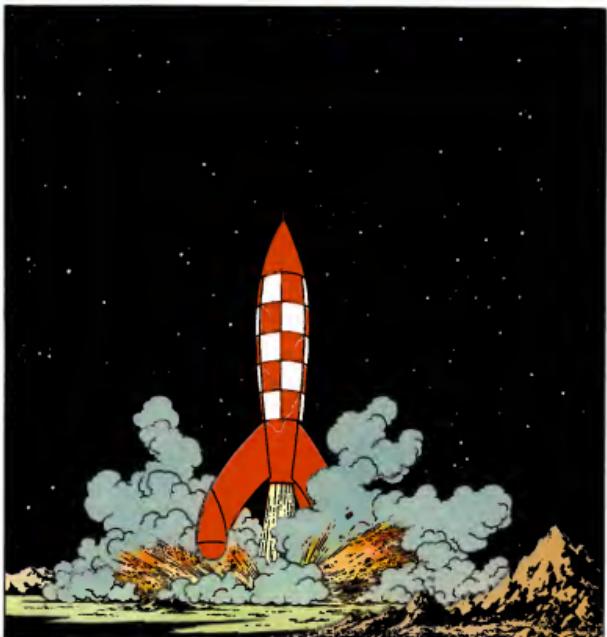
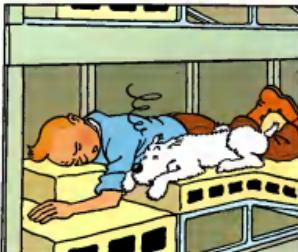
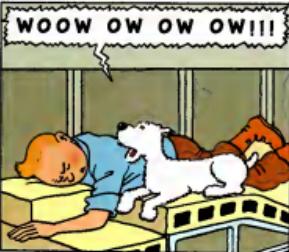


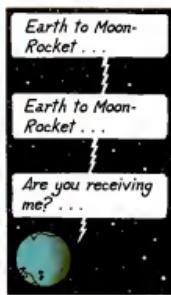
It's amazing!... It's
tremendous!... It's
incredible! Just think:
in a few minutes'
time, either we'll be
walking on the Moon,
or we'll all be dead.
It's marvellous!



Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . Tintin calling . . . We are beginning to feel the effects of slackening speed . . .







Something must be wrong... We've been calling them for more than half an hour, and still no answer... Try again...



Moon-Rocket to Earth... Moon-Rocket to Earth... Receiving you loud and clear...

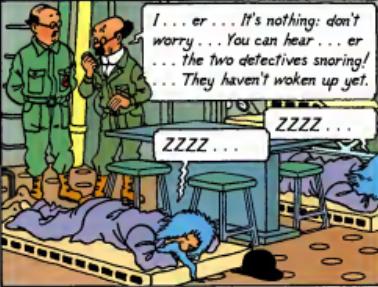
They're alive!... They're alive!...

Hooray!

This is Cuthbert Calculus speaking to you from the Moon!!... Success!... Success!!... We're all safe and sound... We couldn't get through to you before; the radio was damaged. It must have been the vibrations that shook the rocket... Hello Earth... Did you get that?



Message received... But it sounds as if the vibrations haven't stopped yet: we can hear strange rumbling noises...



Now we are going to disembark from the rocket... The honour has fallen to the youngest among us: we have chosen Tintin to be the first human being to set foot on the Moon... He's just gone down to put on his equipment. He'll give you a direct account of his first impressions, so I'll hand you over to him... That's all for now...



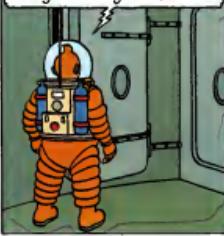
This is Tintin speaking. I've just put on my space-suit and am now standing in the air-lock. They're just going to reduce the pressure to a vacuum inside here. Captain Haddock is in charge. I'm waiting for his final instructions.



Captain Haddock speaking... Pressure zero... Refractable ladder in position... Are you ready? Stand by! I'm opening the door!



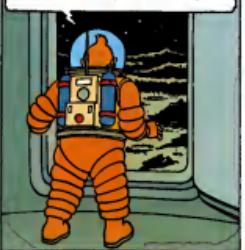
It's a solemn moment... The outside door is swinging slowly on its hinges and...



OOOOOOH!



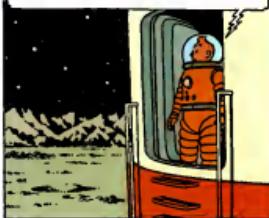
Oooh! What a fantastic sight!



It's... How can I describe it?... It's a nightmare land, a place of death, horrifying in its desolation... Not a tree, not a flower, not a blade of grass... Not a bird, not a sound, not a cloud. In the inky black sky there are thousands of stars...



... but they are motionless, frozen; they don't twinkle in the way that makes them look so alive to us on Earth.



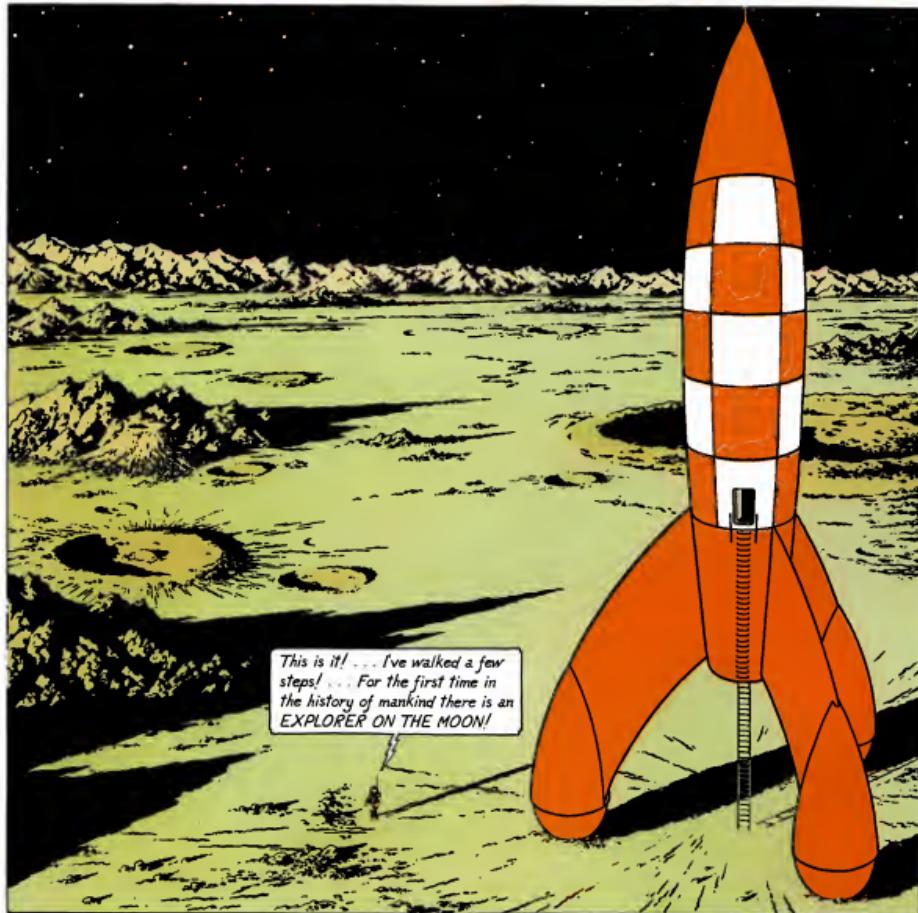
Now I'm descending the ladder which runs down the side of the rocket.

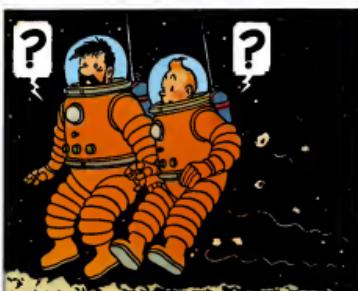
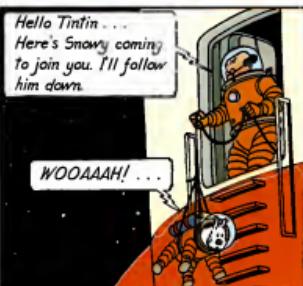
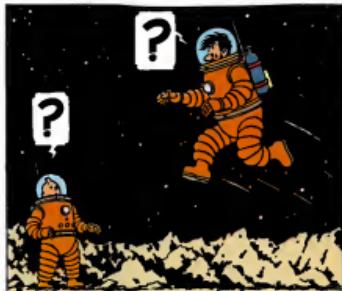


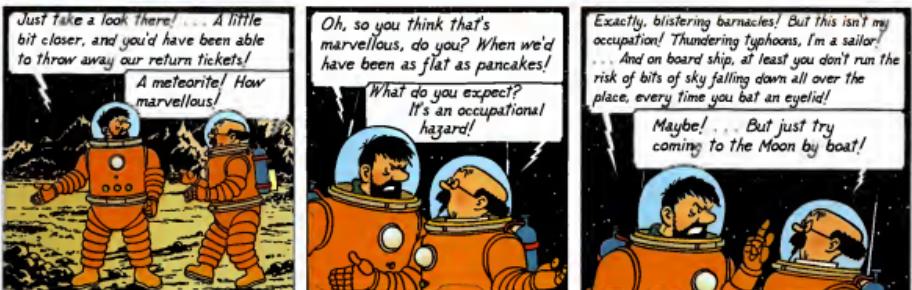
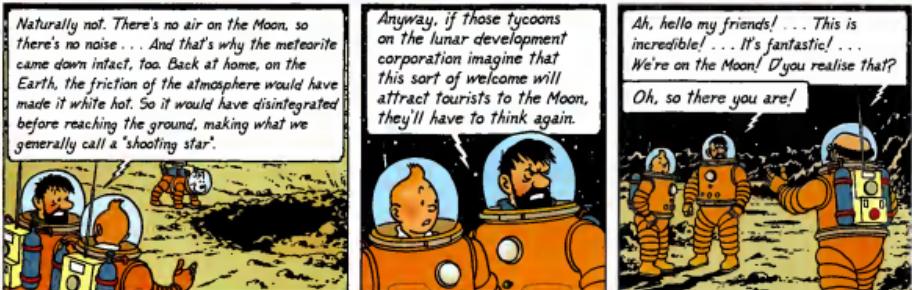
Only a few more rungs ... Now three ... Now two ... Now only one ... This is it!

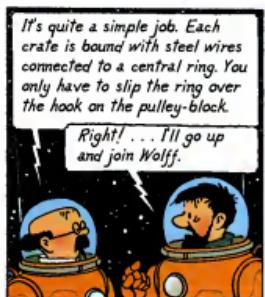
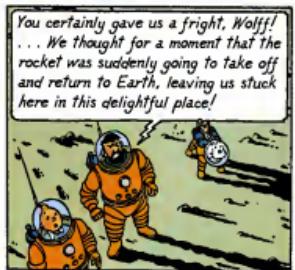
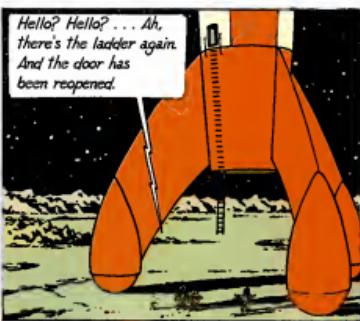


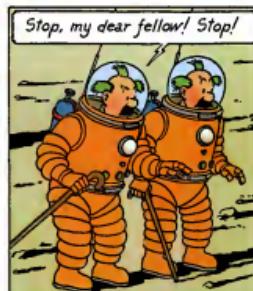
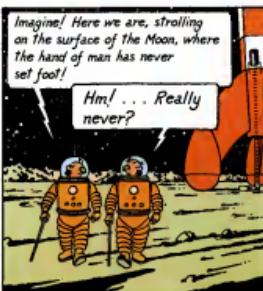
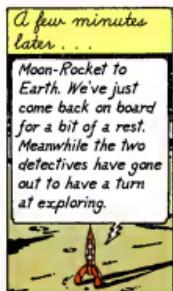
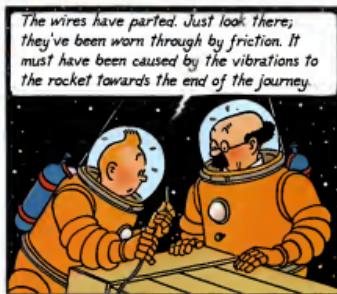
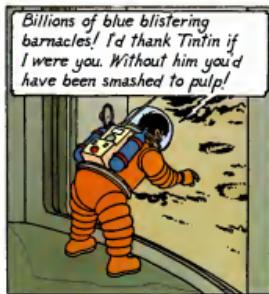
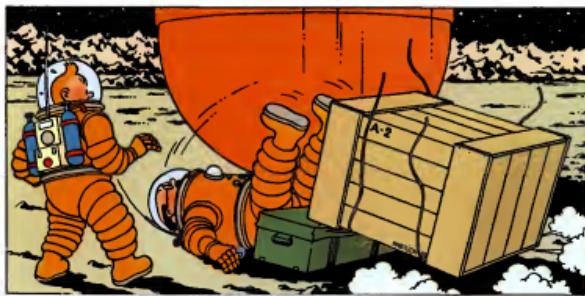
This is it! ... I've walked a few steps! ... For the first time in the history of mankind there is an EXPLORER ON THE MOON!

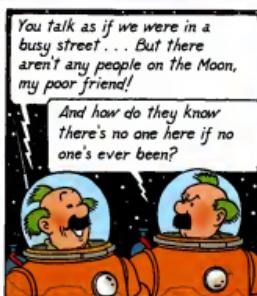
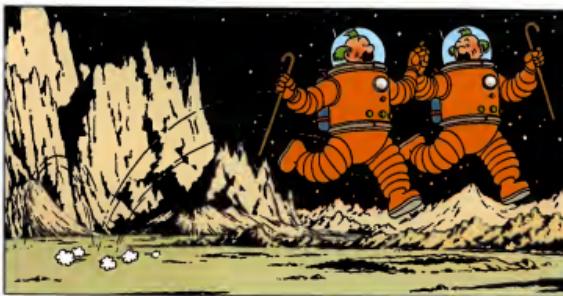
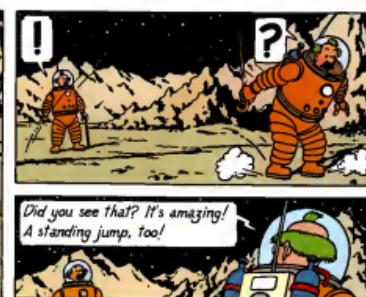
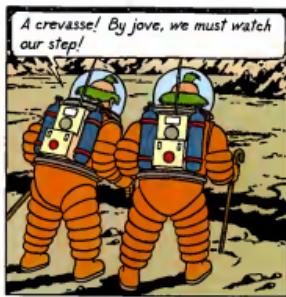


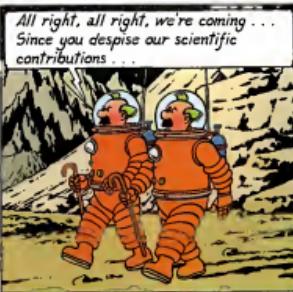
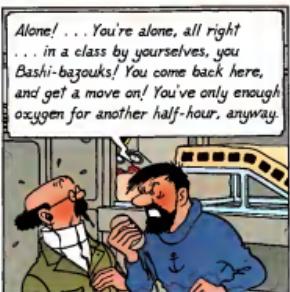
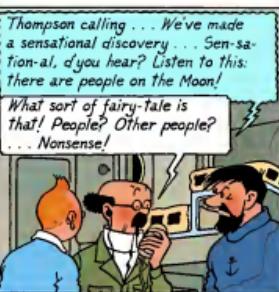
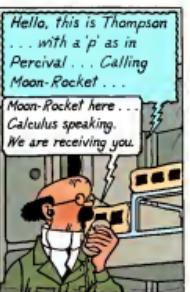












A few minutes later . . .

Gentlemen, our plan was to stay on the Moon for a whole lunar day - that's equivalent to fourteen terrestrial days. But our oxygen supplies were intended for four people and one dog, and not for six people, which is our present number. So we shall have to restrict our stay to six days.

We must therefore hasten our work. While Wolff and I set up our observational instruments, Tintin and the Captain will unload the components of our reconnaissance tank and assemble it. Is that agreed? Right then, gentlemen, let's get to work!



**EXTRACT FROM THE LOG BOOK
BY PROFESSOR CALCULUS**

3rd June - 2145 hrs. (9 M.T.). Unloading of cargo completed. Wolff and I have started to install the observatory. Ceased work at 2200 hrs. Captain Haddock and Tintin have begun assembling the tank.

4th June - 0830 hrs. Operations commenced at 0400 hrs. (9 M.T.). Telescope mounted. Camera in position. Telemetric in working order.

Moon to Earth . . . Calculus calling . . . The optical instruments and cameras are ready for use. We are beginning our observational work.

Observe away, my friends. You do that! Your discoveries will be vastly interesting . . . TO US! Ha! ha! ha! ha!



**EXTRACT FROM THE LOG BOOK
BY PROFESSOR CALCULUS**

4th June - 2150 hrs. (9 M.T.). Wolff and I spent the day studying cosmic rays, and making astronomical observations. Our findings have been entered progressively in Special Record Books Nos. I and II. The Captain and Tintin have nearly finished assembling the tank.

5th June - 1920 hrs. (9 M.T.). Half an hour ago the Captain and Tintin pronounced the tank ready for use.

Moon to Earth . . . Calculus calling . . . The tank is ready. We're going to make the first trials. Tintin will be in charge. He's just entering the turret.

He has just secured the hatch. Now they are filling the insulated cabin with air. When this is done they can remove their space-suits; then Tintin will take the controls and the Captain will act as lookout.



Ah, there's Tintin's head showing through the multiplex cockpit cover. He's smiling at me and signalling that everything's in order.



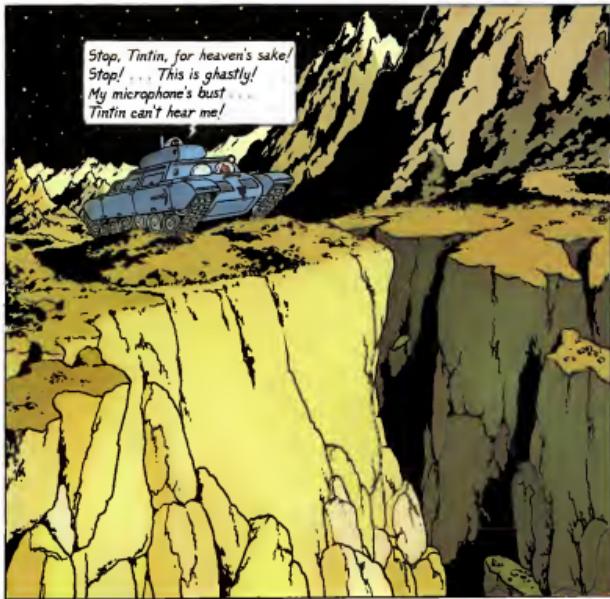
And there's the Captain. Like Tintin, he's signalling to us that all's well. He's wearing his head-phones and . . .

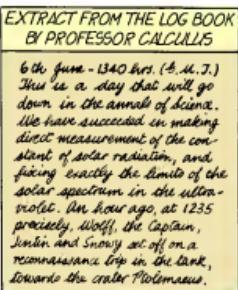
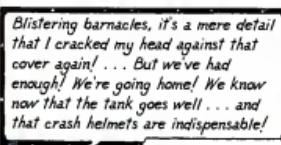


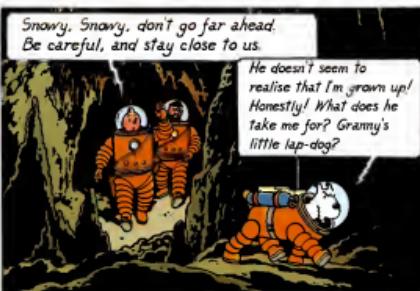
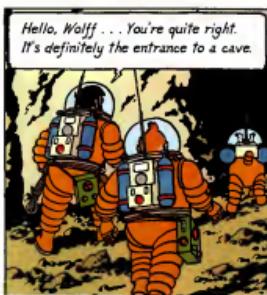
Hello, Haddock calling . . . Ready for departure . . . Hello there, Tintin, weigh the anchor!

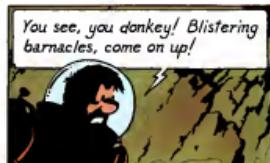
OK . . . Off we go!

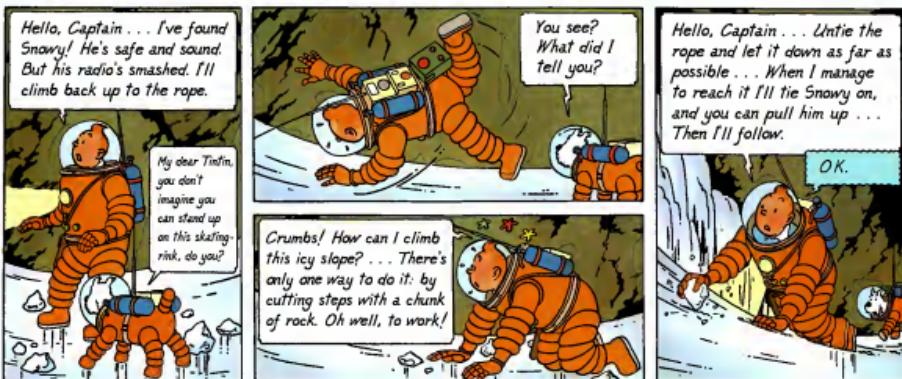
Good luck!

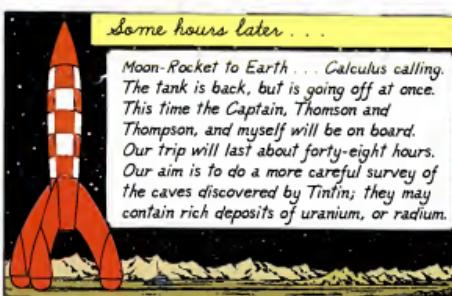
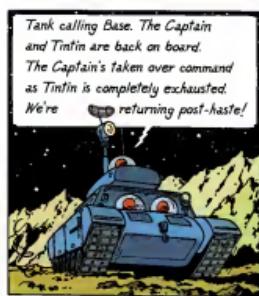
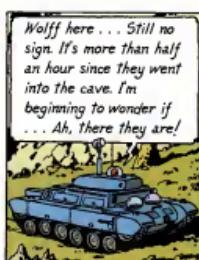












Moon-Rocket to Earth ... Calculus calling. The tank is back, but is going off at once. This time the Captain, Thomson and Thompson, and myself will be on board. Our trip will last about forty-eight hours. Our aim is to do a more careful survey of the caves discovered by Tintin; they may contain rich deposits of uranium, or radium.



Goodbye . . . See you soon.
I'm going to start mending
The radios on our space-
suits. Goodbye!



It's time for a meal. I . . . er . . .
I'll go down to the stores to find
something for lunch . . .



Would you like me
to go?

No, no . . . er . . .
don't you bother.
I'll go myself.

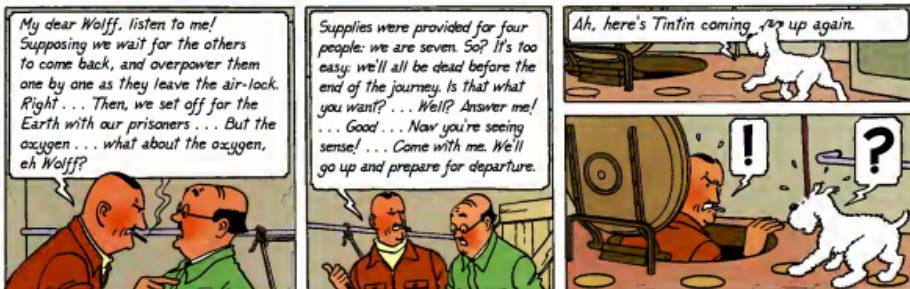


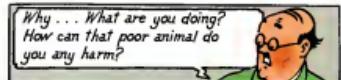
It's strange how Wolff has
altered. At first, in the centre
at Sprodj, he was smiling and
happy . . . He's not the same
man at all now. What can
have changed him so?



He's going down! It's
too late to do anything!
Now he's at the
bottom . . . He's going
into the hold . . .







So that's that! And now, my friend,
you're going to cook me a nice hot
meal. For eight days I've been living
on dry sandwiches, and I've had enough
of them! So get moving! ... And don't
waste any time!



Then we set off for the
Earth. Ha! ha! ha! I'd like
to see their faces when they
find the rocket's gone! ...
Killing!

Is that food
coming, Wolff?
I'm as hungry
as a lion!

In a minute... I...
Not long now...

Hello! Tank
calling Base!

We've had a breakdown.
The motor batteries are flat.
A short-circuit, I expect.
The Captain is just connecting
the small emergency batteries,
so that we can get back
to Base.



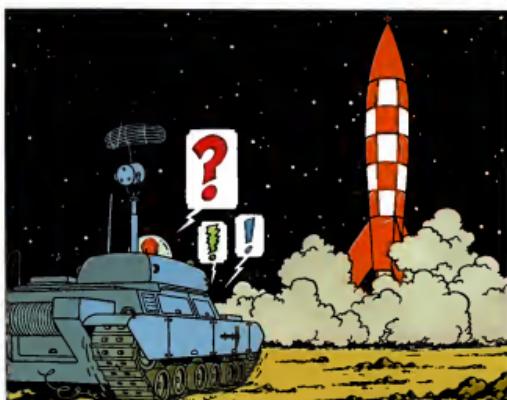
I don't understand at all.
I... Why, what's that
humming noise? Good
heavens! It's the motor...
But then... then... the
rocket's going to take off...

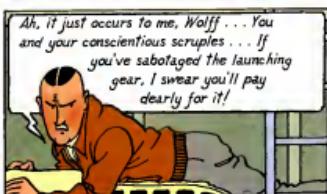
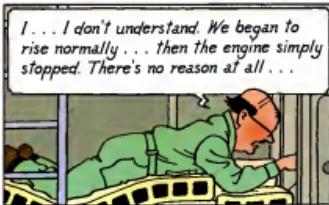
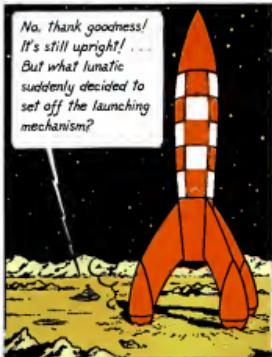
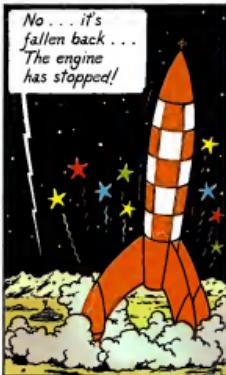
But where are the others?
Prisoners like myself? But
come to think of it... Poor
devils! They went off in the
tank... Are they going to be
left on the Moon? Wolff!
Wolff! HELP!

Tank calling Base... We're returning at reduced
speed. We can see the rocket... Can you hear me?

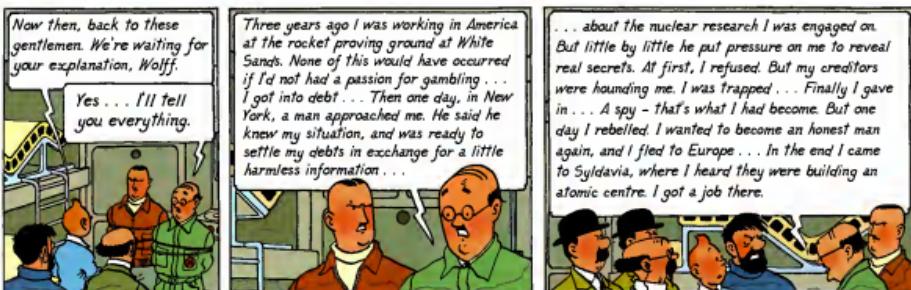


No, not yet.









What about the skeleton, Wolff? Was that you?

Yes, skeleton, were you the Wolff? Come on, answer up!

Blistering barnacles, this is a SERIOUS interrogation! In other words, anacoluthons, you keep out of it!

Well, thanks to Tintin, your enemies didn't succeed in capturing the trial rocket: you blew it up in flight. But they believed that it was I who betrayed them, and they threatened to kill me. Then they learned that this rocket was under construction, and they gave me fresh orders... One of the crates coming from Oberköchen would be faked, and would conceal a journalist. My part would be simply to facilitate his task...



And you believed a fairy-tale like that? You two-faced traitor! A cock-and-bull story! It would make a cat laugh!

Er... they said he'd reveal his presence once the rocket reached the Moon.



Then, soon after our arrival here, I took advantage of your absence to let him out of his hiding place. It was Jorgen. He divulged his real objective: to capture the rocket and take it back, not to Sprodj, but to the country for which he works.



Two more points, Wolff... The ladder being retracted... and the crate that nearly squashed us: was that you?

Yes!... And when you were just behind me pretending to have an attack of dizziness, you meant to push me out into space, eh, gangster?



And I trusted you implicitly... Oh! Wolff!



Today, when Tintin was alone on board and the rest of you had departed for forty-eight hours, the Colonel decided to act. At the given moment, Tintin went down into the hold...

That's to say, you'd been first, to set your accomplice free. Then you managed to arrange that I'd go down myself.



Er... yes... I stayed here, and it was he who knocked out Tintin. It was only afterwards that he told me of his plan to abandon you on the Moon. I tried to stop him... I swear I did!



Well, go on.

Yes, out with it, Judas!

I believe you. This is what happened then... When I came round I was in the hold, trussed up like a chicken... I heard the hum of the motor, and realised what was going on... Luckily for us, these two worthy characters were never Boy Scouts!



I mean that they don't know how to tie a knot! So I managed to get rid of my ropes without too much difficulty. And none too soon! The engine was just starting. As the rocket was rising, I severed all the leads. The motor stopped immediately, and the rocket fell back to the ground...



And thanks to Tintin, we were saved!

Saved?... Ah, my poor friends, I only hope that you are not rejoicing too soon!



Undoubtedly by cutting the leads Tintin averted disaster... for the time being. Alas, it is only too likely that in falling, the rocket suffered serious damage. And this will probably take time to repair. Meanwhile, there's still the grave problem of the oxygen... But let's hear the rest of your story, Tintin.



Where was I?... Oh yes. Once the rocket grounded, I opened the door of the air-lock and lowered the retractable ladder, so that you could get in. Then, having armed myself with a pistol and spanner, I came quietly up to the cabin... I found myself right in the middle of a family squabble...



This thug accused Wolff of sabotaging the launching gear, and was going to shoot him. My spanner knocked his gun out of his hand. Just in time, wasn't it, my dear Jorgen... as it seems that you are no longer Colonel Boris.



Oh yes, we met in Syldavia, over that business of King Ottokar's Sceptre. Under the name of Boris, he was aide-de-camp to King Muskar XII, whom he shamefully betrayed. I won the first round, but for a while he seemed to be winning the second...



And now we'll dump these two down in the hold.

What?... While we risk running out of oxygen, we're going to clutter the place up with these pirates? They were going to abandon us on the Moon: well, that's the fate they deserve themselves... by thunder!



We must be more chivalrous than they were, Captain... Now, you're the expert, so take them below and tie them up securely.

As you like! But you'll live to regret your noble gesture. Mark my words: you'll regret it!



Anyway, my little lambs, I'm going to knit you lovely little rope waistcoats to keep you nice and warm! Hand-made, by thunder! Guaranteed absolutely perfect!



Do what you like with me. But please be kind enough to stop spluttering in my face - it's wet!



What?... Me?... Wet?... Blistering barnacles, you dare... A man of spirit like me! To hear myself insulted, by this creature, this Bashi-bazouk!



Calm down? Calm down?... But you heard him, this little black-beetle! Daring to make out that I'm wet! Calm down! I like that, from you!



To call me wet!... What a nerve!

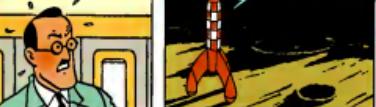


Come now, Captain, the incident is closed. Go on down to the hold with the two prisoners.

That's right. In the meantime I'll get in touch with the Earth and tell them what's been happening.

Moon-Rocket calling Earth. There have been extremely serious developments here... A traitor, in the service of some unknown Power, was secretly smuggled aboard the rocket.

Wolff was his accomplice... Yes, Wolff!... Today they went into action and tried to seize control of the rocket. Fortunately we have managed to overpower them, and put a stop to their mischief.



Meanwhile...

There! If you succeed in getting yourselves undone, blistering barnacles, I'll sign the pledge and drink nothing but water for the rest of my days!

A few minutes later...



I've just made a superficial inspection of the damage to the rocket. My preliminary estimate is that it will take us at least a hundred hours to effect the necessary repairs.

To that must be added the time for our return journey. We have oxygen supplies for a hundred hours at the most, which means that having used our last resources to re-launch the rocket, we shall run the risk of arriving on Earth as corpses.

Perhaps! But meanwhile we're still very much alive. And we'll start work at once. At all costs we must get everything finished in the shortest possible time!



Moon-Rocket to Earth. We're going to begin the repair work. Give us some music: it will keep up our morale.

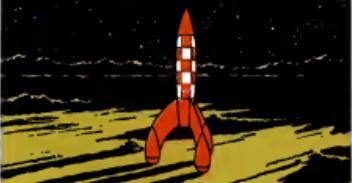


Come on, come on, cry-babies! To work! And none of those gloomy thoughts. We're going to have some music. Thundering typhoons. There's nothing like a bit of music to cheer you up!

This is Radio-Klaw. Our programme continues with 'The Gravedigger', by Schubert.



The time passes... slowly, the lunar night falls on the desolate landscape...



Seventy-two hours have gone by . . .

Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . The work is well ahead. Barring accidents, we shall have finished by midday . . . However, we are having to abandon the tank and the optical instruments on the Moon. To dismantle them and then reload them would take too long, in view of the little oxygen remaining.



We are only keeping the recording instruments, the cameras, and, of course, the oxygen cylinders from the tank. They constitute our final reserves. Tintin and the Captain have gone to collect them. I'm switching over now, as I want to keep in touch with them.

Right.



Hello Tintin . . . Calculus here . . . How are you getting on?

All right, thanks. But the sun has completely vanished. Only the mountain-tops are still glowing on the horizon . . .



But it's not preventing us from seeing, as there's a wonderful light from the Earth.

Pom Pom Pom And they danced by the light of the Earth



We have left a message sealed inside the tank for those who may one day follow in our steps. If we are lost with all hands, this message will be a reminder of the fantastic adventures of the first men on the Moon. Now we are coming back on board.



A few minutes later . . .

Everything's in order, Professor.

Good. Well, I've finished all the repairs. Earth have just given me the result of their reckoning. Take-off should be at 16.52 hours. So we have about two hours to go.



I advise you to lie down, to save oxygen. But before doing that, Captain, would you go to the hold and make the prisoners lie down as well, so that they won't suffer too much.

What?? And would you like me to take them breakfast in bed?



Keeping them is crazy enough! But to coddle them like babes in arms . . . blistering barnacles, that's the limit! Still, I'll go.



Two hours later . . .

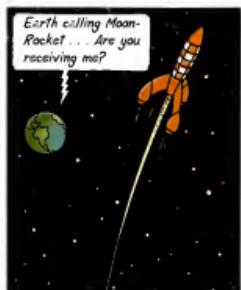
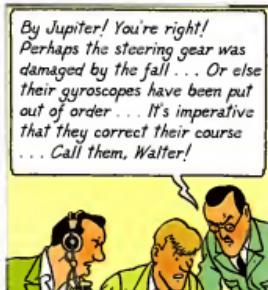
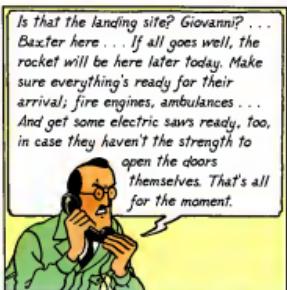
Earth calling Moon-Rocket . . . Stand by . . . Stand by . . .



Thirty seconds to go . . . Twenty seconds to go . . . Ten seconds to go . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . ZERO!

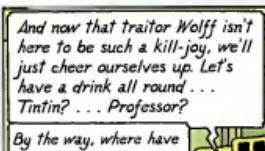
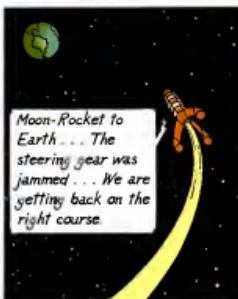
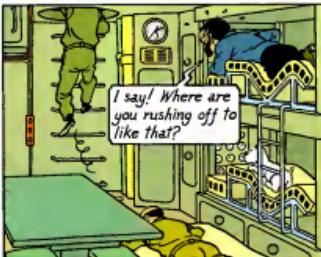


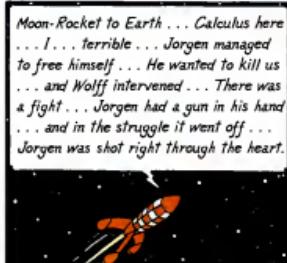
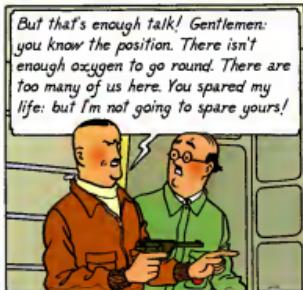
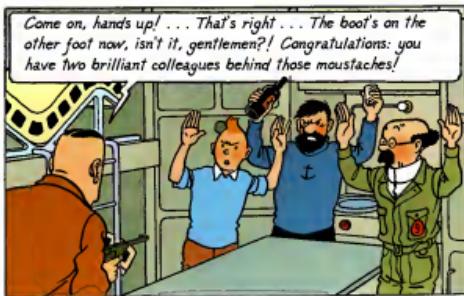
I press the button . . . and pray that everything works properly! Otherwise, we're condemned to death!





Right!





I understand; carbon dioxide is accumulating . . . and when you work yourself up . . .

He's right, Captain.
Do please keep calm!

You do as you like! But on your own head be it if we have trouble from this scorpion, Wolff!
I disclaim all responsibility!

Don't worry, nothing will happen. I'll answer for him. Now, it will be better to lie on our bunks: in that way we'll save oxygen.

But first of all we must go and release the two defectives . . . And what shall we do about Jorgen's body? . . .

The only answer is to leave it in space.

A few minutes later . . .

Earth to Moon-Rocket . . . Here is your latest position . . . You are now 31,000 miles from your point of departure . . . How are things going on board?



Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . The carbon dioxide is getting worse and worse . . . It's hard to breathe now . . . but still, for the moment, things are bearable . . .

The others are dozing on their bunks. I'm having to struggle to keep myself from falling asleep.

Earth to Moon-Rocket . . . Don't struggle, Tintin. Go to sleep. We'll wake you up when it's time for the turning operation.



Time goes by . . .

I think the coast is clear now. Everybody's asleep. This is my chance.



Let's hope no one wakes up! . . . No, all's well.



Where are you going, Wolff?



Ssh! Not so loud! . . . I'm going below, to the hold to . . . er . . . I think there's another cylinder of oxygen down there.



I had to ask, you see. The Captain particularly told me to give him details of every single move you made.



It's incredible . . . He hasn't given the alarm . . . Fate is on my side: I shall succeed!

Zzzz . . .
Zzzz . . .



Half an hour later . . .

Earth calling Moon-Rocket . . .
Can you hear me? . . . Earth
calling Moon-Rocket . . . Can
you hear me? . . .



Can you hear me? . . .
MOON-ROCKET!



Moon-Rocket to
Earth . . . Tintin
here . . .

Ah! You
really scared
us!

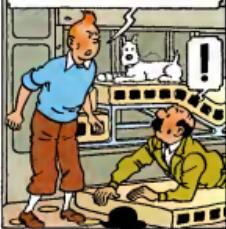


Stand by . . . You have a quarter
of an hour to go before the
turning operation.

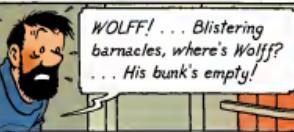
Right. We'll get ready.
I'll wake up
the others.



Wake up! . . . Everybody
on the alert! Put on your
magnetic-soled boots! In a
quarter of an hour we have
to turn the rocket round.



Ugh! More of those confounded acrobatics!
I was just dreaming that I was by my fireside
at Marlinspike with my cat . . . on my knee
. . . and instead . . .



Don't worry, Captain. I know where
Wolff is . . . He went down to the hold
a few minutes ago.



And you let him go, you nitwitted
nine-pin, you? . . . Even when I'd told
you to keep an eye on him?



I did keep an eye on him;
he told me himself
he was going to the
hold.

And you were so keen to play
the big-hearted hero! . . . Heaven
knows what treachery that wolf
in sheep's clothing is cooking up
for us! . . .



Down to the hold, quick! It may not
be too late!



What sitting ducks we'll make if
our friend decides to have a
little target-practice!



Now, where's
he hiding,
the gangster!



Thousands of thundering typhoons! There! . . .
What did I tell you? . . . Look!



The brute! ... The cannibal! He's sabotaged the ... the things ... er ... the doings ... I mean, the whatnots!



Look, a letter.

Great snakes! The poor, poor wretch! ... This is horrible!

What? What is it? Read it out.



By the time you read this I shall have left the rocket ... When I am gone, I hope you will have enough oxygen to reach earth alive. Perhaps by some miracle I shall escape too. Forgive me for the harm I have done you — Wolff

Wolff

What! It can't be true! If he'd opened the outer door the motor would have stopped.



P.S.

To open the outer door without sounding the alarm and stopping the motor, I had to cut a few wires. You only need to reconnect them, and everything will work properly again

W.

Ten thousand thundering typhoons! He has gone out into space to save our lives! ... And I accused him ...

Yes, Captain. But even so, perhaps his sacrifice will be in vain ... You go on up. I'll just repair these wires ...



Ah, there you are. Well, have you caught that thug Wolff?



What? What did you say? Wolff a thug?! If ever I hear you say one disrespectful thing about that hero, I'll throw you into space to join him! You understand, you iconoclast, you?!



At that moment ...

Earth to Moon-Rocket ... Stand by ... Ten minutes to go before the turning operation.

Right.



A quarter of an hour later ...

Earth to Moon-Rocket ... Turning operation successfully accomplished. Don't give in! In less than two hours you will be back on the Earth.



Yes! ... And they'll give us an impressive memorial! I can see it from here! To Captain Haddock, a martyr in the cause of Science, etcetera, etcetera!



Well, if I have to die, then at least let it be choose, blistering barnacles!



Captain! What are you going to do?

What am I going to do? Thundering typhoons, I'm going to empty this bottle of whisky! Alcohol is a poison that kills slowly, they say... As slowly as it likes...



That's enough, Captain! Go and lie down. This is no time to get drunk! ...



Blistering barnacles, why not? Was I or was I not told that the spirits on board were reserved for an emergency? Well, wasn't I? ...



It's a thousand to one that we're going to end up as a crate of kippers! Ten thousand thundering typhoons, isn't that an emergency?!



Captain, I would remind you that drunkenness on the public highway is against the law. Go and lie down!



You...you two...ectoplasmias! ... They needed two P-P-Punch-and-judy men on the p-p-pier... You...you sh-sh-should have stayed there...



This time we demand an apology!



Yes, we apologise on demand!

F-f-four to one...I...I...give...give...up...



Half-an-hour later...

Moon-Rocket to Earth... The air's becoming unbreatheable... The last cylinder from the space-suits has been used up... The others are already unconscious... I wonder if we can possibly get back alive.



This is Baxter... Hang on, Tintin! You have only about fifty thousand miles to go... just about another hour. Courage, Tintin! Don't lose heart!... All will be well!



Thanks... Mr Baxter... I'll do my best... to hold on till the end... but I... I...



I'm afraid... I... shan't have... the strength... Goodbye!... Goodbye!



Goodbye! Yes, it's goodbye! May you all perish up there! Jorgen and Wolff bungled their work. We shall not get your accursed rocket... Well, may you go to the devil in it!...



For nearly an hour the rocket
hurries on towards the Earth.

Earth to Moon-Rocket... Stand by
... You have only about 8,000 miles
to go... Get ready to set the
automatic pilot...



Moon-Rocket... To Earth... Tintin
here... I understand... I... I'll try
... to rouse... the... Professor.



Professor! Professor!... We're
nearly home... Wake up... We've
got to... set the automatic pilot...



Professor! For goodness' sake!
... Professor please
... It... it's no good... I
can't rouse him... Now
what's to be done?



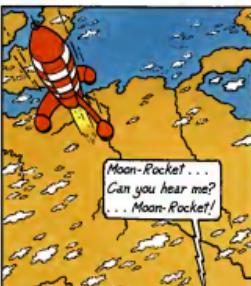
I've... I've simply got
to... try... myself...
There's no one but me
... Oh, I'm stiffening...



I must... I must get to
... to the ladder...

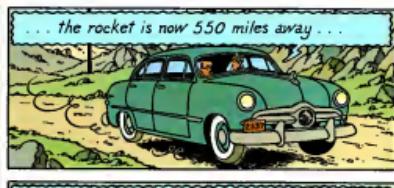


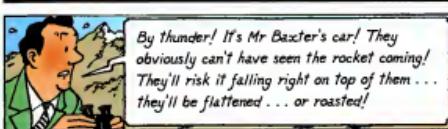
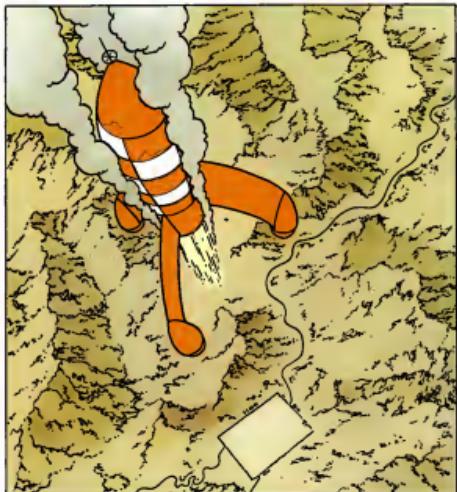
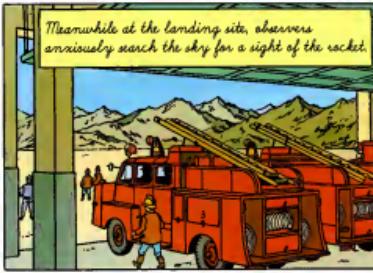
I've done it...
But... shall I ever
have the strength...

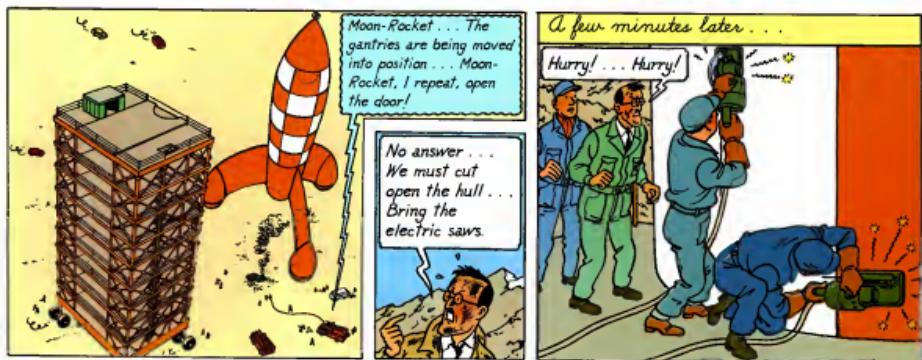


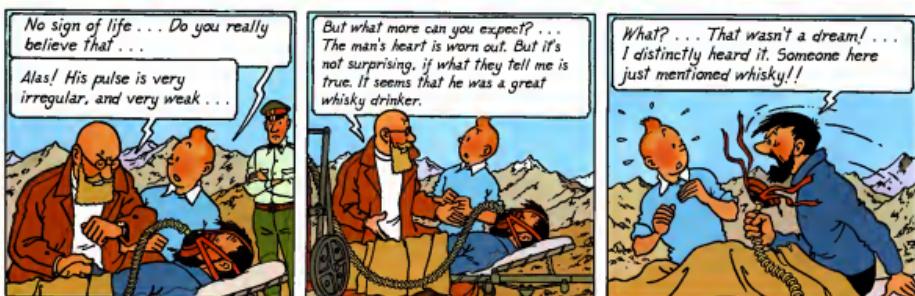
Earth to Moon-Rocket... Are you
in the control cabin?
Come on... one
last effort...

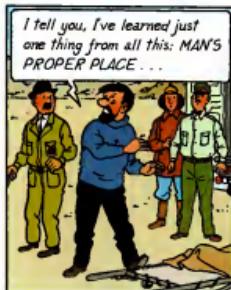
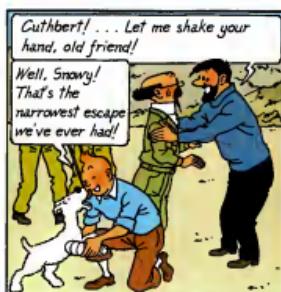












THE END

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Quick

STOP

RST